# HISTORY OF LOUDOUN COUNTY

Loudoun County constitutes a part of the five million acre Northern Neck of Virginia Proprietary granted by King Charles II of England to seven noblemen in 1649. This grant, later known as the Fairfax Proprietary, lay between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. Between 1653 and 1730, Westmoreland, Stafford and Prince William Counties were formed within the Proprietary, and in 1742 the remaining land was designated Fairfax County.

The Town of Leesburg has served continuously as the County Seat since 1757 and is believed to derive its name from Francis Lightfoot Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Settling of the Loudoun area began between 1725 and 1730 while it was still owned by Lord Fairfax. Permanent settlers came from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. During the same period, settlers from eastern Virginia came to lower Loudoun and established large tobacco plantations.

During the War of 1812, Loudoun County served briefly as temporary refuge for the President and important state papers. The Constitution and other state papers were brought to Rokeby, near Leesburg, for safekeeping when the British burned Washington. President Madison established headquarters at Belmont, where he was the guest of Ludwell Lee.

For more than two centuries, agriculture was the dominant way of life in Loudoun County, which had a relatively constant population of about 20,000. That began to change in the early 1960s, when Dulles International Airport was built in the southeastern part of the County.

Today, Loudoun County is a growing, dynamic County of about 278,000 people. Loudoun is known for its beautiful scenery, rich history, comfortable neighborhoods, and high quality public services.